

REMARKS

1. Applicant confirms the election of the Group I claims (Claims 1 – 14) in response to the telephonic restriction requirement. In further response thereto, Applicant has canceled the non-elected Claims 15 – 20 from the application.
2. The Office Action has objected to Claims 3 – 8 because the word “first” in Claim 3, line 3, should be “second”. In response thereto, Applicant has amended Claim 3 to correct this error. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that this objection be reconsidered and withdrawn.
3. The Office Action has objected to Claims 7 and 8 because the word “narrow” is a term of degree that is not defined in the specification or in Claim 7. In response thereto, Applicant has amended Claim 7 to define the width dimension of the neck portion as being narrower than the enlarged head portion, which geometry is clearly defined in the specification and drawings. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that this objection be reconsidered and withdrawn.
4. The Office Action has rejected Claims 13 and 14 because of a typographical error in line 3 of Claim 13 misspelling the word “trunk” as “truck”. Applicant has amended Claim 13 to correct this typographical error. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that this objection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

5. The Office Action has rejected Claims 1 – 4 and 9 – 13 under the provisions of 25 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U. S. Patent No. 6,394,511 (Lam). The Office Action states that Lam teaches an open informational image on a trunk release handle formed from light emitting material. The Office Action deems the image to be black, which means that no light emitting material is present within the image itself. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Lam reference represents the trunk release handle over which the instant invention is an improvement. In Lam, the entire handle is formed of the light emitting material. The images are formed by screen printing a black image over top of the light emitting material so that the emitted light cannot shine through the black image. Lam suffers from the disadvantage of degradation of the image under circumstances where the screen printed image erodes from the handle, thus causing the image to deform or become eliminated entirely.

The image in the instant invention, as is defined in amended independent Claims 1 and 9 as being open such that no light emitting material is present within the informational image and does not underlie the information image. In Lam, the light emitting material is easily found to be present within the informational images and certainly underlies the informational images. Furthermore, none of the cited prior art referenced in the Office Action, whether taken singly or in combination, teach or suggest the formation of a trunk release handle in which the informational images are formed as holes through the handle such that no light emitting material shines from the images, but surrounds the images to define the image by the lack of light emitting material.

In view of the above, Applicant respectfully requests that this rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

6. The Office Action has rejected Claims 1 – 4, 9 and 12 – 13 under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U. S. Patent No. 6,346,984 (Marrazzo) in view of U. S. Patent No. 6,369,395 (Roesler). The Office Action concludes that Marrazzo discloses a trunk release handle similar to Applicant's invention, however, Marrazzo does not disclose the manufacturing of the handle with no material within or underlying the image being displayed, which teaching is supplied by Roesler. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicant respectfully submits that Roesler contains no teaching or suggestion that the trunk release handle could be formed with open images, as is claimed in amended independent Claims 1 and 9, wherein no light emitting material is present within or underlies the image. At column 4, lines 1 – 2, of Roesler, the teaching suggests that the entire handle need not be covered with light emitting material, but there is no teaching whatsoever that the image could be formed as an opening through the handle to define an open image with no light emitting material within or underlying the image. As noted in the Office Action, Marrazzo contains no teaching or suggestion to meet this specific claim limitation.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the Marrazzo/Roesler combination cannot meet or make obvious, whether taken singly or in combination, Applicant's invention as defined in amended independent Claims 1 and 9. For these reasons, Applicant respectfully requests that this rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

7. The Office Action has rejected Claims 5, 7 and 8 under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Marrazzo in view of Roesler and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,459,693 (Gordon). The Office Action states that Gordon adds to the teachings

of the Marrazzo/Roesler combination the use of phosphorescent plastic as the light emitting material. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 5, 7 and 8 depend from Claim 1 and provide additional claim limitations further defining Applicant's invention. Applicant respectfully submits that Gordon adds nothing to the Marrazzo/Roesler combination to meet the specific limitations in amended independent Claim 1 relating to the formation of the images as a opening through the handle so that there is no light emitting material within or underlying the image. Since dependent Claims 5, 7 and 8 include the limitations of Claim 1, as discussed above, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 5, 7 and 8 should be passed to allowance with Claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that this rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

8. The Office Action rejects Claims 9 – 11 under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Roesler. The Office Action states that Roesler discloses the open informational images such that no phosphorescent material is present within the image. The Office Action concludes that it would be obvious to make the informational images devoid of phosphorescent material to improve the contrast between the image and the background of the handle. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As noted above, the images on the Roesler invention are formed through applying a screen printing on the handle to define a blocked out shape corresponding to the desired informational image. Roesler contains no teaching or suggestion that the image could be formed as an opening through the handle so that the image has no light emitting material within or underlying the image, as is set forth in amended independent Claim 9. Since this reference

cannot meet the limitations of the invention as defined in independent Claim 9, whether taken singly or in combination with the other cited references, Applicant respectfully requests that this rejection should be reconsidered and withdrawn.

9. The Office Action has objected to dependent Claims 6 and 14 as depending from rejected independent Claims. In response thereto, Applicant has added new Claims 21 – 25, with Claim 21 being independent and the remaining claims depending therefrom. Applicant has submitted new independent Claim 21 as being a combination of Claim 1 with the addition of limitations from Claim 6 and other of the intervening dependent claims between Claims 1 and 6. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that newly presented Claims 21 – 25 be passed to allowance.

Applicant respectfully submits that the addition of newly presented Claims 21 – 25 do not require any additional filing fees due to the cancellation of Claims 15 – 20 from the application due to the restriction requirement. With the addition of new Claims 21 – 26, this application presently has three (3) independent claims and a total of nineteen (19) claims, which is within the limits permitted with the basic filing fee.

10. In summary, Claims 1, 3, 7, 9 and 13 have been amended, Claims 15 – 20 have been canceled, Claims 21 - 25 have been added, and Claims 1 – 14, 21 - 25 remain in the application. Applicants believe that the claims are allowable based on the foregoing amendments. Applicants respectfully request that all objections and rejections be reconsidered and withdrawn and that all claims remaining in this case be allowed.

Pursuant to currently recommended Patent Office practice, the Examiner is expressly authorized to call the undersigned attorney if in his judgment disposition of this application could be expedited or if he considers the case ready for final disposition by other than allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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